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HUMOR

BY RICHARD MELTZER

Your Poem or Mine?

Wear a diaphragm to readings:
a poet may want to take you home.
Or (if you prefer)
a trip to your place
will broaden his horizons.
Visits to new lands & cultures
will help him map out
which way is up.
His nails are clipped
so in his explorations of your
fjords and crannies
you will not be lacerated:
poets respect your being
(they will not bite
what isn't food).
Nurture: poets need nurture.
It's the gravest of sins
— at least a callous oversight —
to let one starve.

I, a poet,
a so-called macho poet,
have not left a reading
with a real gal in
more than four years.
I'm an old fuck,
I beat off a lot
and rely on memory and speculation
(in a word, poetry)
to fuel even that.
A poet is a poet's best friend:
won't you please befriend me?
Be my second best and
listen to my every word,
to the virile heart
that beats behind it,
pumping blood and poems,
new poems,
hot, never-to-be-transcribed poems
you will be the first
and last to hear.
Generous to a fault
with my blood and poetry,
I have bled and poemed
for your ma and your pa
on one-way streets of the soul
from here to Kalamazoo.

In my spare time (when
not writing poems)
I'm an all-round sensitive guy,
a passable stick man
— and let's not forget
the tongue.
I know three quarters of everything
worth knowing
and am an animal when and
where it counts.
You've probably made bigger mistakes
in the last hour
than you could possibly make
coming home with me,
a more accessible poet
than anyone else on the bill.
More macho and more starving,
I'll sing for my supper.
I'll play "Willow Weep for Me"
on my rented alto sax;
I'll show you some fun
Hey (time permitting),
I'll write you a poem!
I'll even let you title it yourself.

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